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Rulers should be Benefactors.

As it was Consider'd

I N A

SERMON

Preach'd before His Excellency

SAMUEL SHUTE Esq;

His Majesty's COUNCIL,

and the Representatives of

the Province of the Massachu-

setts-Bay in New-England,

May 30th. 1722.

Being the Day for Election of

COUNSELLORS.

By **John Hancock, M. A.**

And Pastor of the Church of CHRIST
in Lexington.

Boston in N.E.

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lency the GOVERNOUR & COUNCIL.

1722.

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In Council, June 4th, 1722.

Ordered,

THAT Addington Davenport
and Jonathan Belcher, Esqrs;
give the Thanks of this Board to the Re-
verend Mr. John Hancock, for his
SERMON Preached to the General
Assembly, on the Day of Election of
Councillors, and Desire a Copy thereof
in Order to its being Printed.

J. Willard, Secr.





RULERS

Should be *Benefactors*.

LUKE XXII. 25.

And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them, are called Benefactors.



THE high and solemn Occasion of the Day will not allow me to take up the time in looking back into the preceeding Context; I shall therefore only just hint at the Occasion of the words I have now read unto you, and then consider the words themselves.

As to the occasion of them, it was an unhappy Contention among the Disciples of CHRIST about Primacy and Superiority, in the Verse which immediately

diately preceeds the Text, *there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.* Contention is the fruit of pride and ambition. Men that have a mind to be uppermost in the World can't be quiet, unless they are gratified in it. But all the Disciples of CHRIST were not guilty of this unseasonable affectation; the two Sons of Zebedee it seems were the chief in this business. Its well the other of CHRIST's Disciples had more wisdom, and more grace, than to make so much trouble about secular honor and promotion.

IT becomes the Disciples of CHRIST to be *humble*, and to watch against ambition. The meek and the admirable JESUS to quiet the Spirits of these aspiring Disciples tells them, that Temporal Lordship and Dominion did not belong to them, that he had superior honors to bestow upon them, after they had served him a while here in the world, and that if they would have a little patience, he would promote them unto great honor, and make them *Sit upon thrones judging the tribes of Israel.*

THEIR business at present was not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and it was a vanity in them to dream of Temporal Promotion, for *his Kingdom was not of this world.* The high and dignified Titles of *Archontes* and *Basileis* did not belong to them, but only those of *Douloi*, and *Diaconoi*. Temporal Power and Jurisdiction belongs to the Princes of the Gentiles, and not unto the Ministers of CHRIST. *The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them, and they that exercise authority*

authority upon them are called Benefactors. And so we are come to the Words themselves; and in them we may observe,

1. THE Power that Sovereign Princes are Invested with, it is a Power of Lordship and Dominion. *The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Lordship.* They do it *de facto*, and they do it *de jure*. The supream Dominion is the LORD's; but there is a delegated Dominion and Power vested in the Sons of Men. GOD is the Sovereign LORD; but the Princes and Kings of the Earth are his Lieutenants, his Deputies, and Vicegerents, and have a lawfull right to exercise Dominion.

2. THE Ends to which they ought to exercise their Authority; to the good, the benefit, the advantage of those who are under their Authority. This is the great End of all Rule and Government; and the best Ends of Government are ~~perverted~~, when they that have the Dominion tyrannize over the People, and exercise their Authority in a Lordly and Domineering manner; this Power is given *for Edification and not for Destruction.*

3. THE honorable Appellation that belongs to them when they exercise their Authority regularly, and suitably to the original design and institution of Government: *They are called Benefactors.* And very properly called so, according to the notation of the Word; because *they do good* in their places, make a proper Improvement of their Powers, and are *Publick Blessings* to the World.

THE Greek Word *Kalountai*, is often used for *Eis*, they are Benefactors, and shall be called, accounted, esteemed, and highly honored as such to the

the Kingdoms and Countries under their auspicious Government.

THE Kings of the Gentiles were fond of assuming magnificent *Titles* unto themselves, and sometimes the good they did to the Publick, justly merited some memorable Appellation. So one of the *Aegyptian Ptolomies* had the name of *Euergetes*, and if *Tertullus* the Orator might be believed, *Felix* the Roman Governour for the Province of *Judea* was a happy Ruler, and might well be called a Benefactor; for this is the Encomium given of him. Acts 24. 2. *Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, &c.* This was an Excellent commendation of *Felix*, his Government, if it had been true and spoken without flattery. But *Tacitus* says of *Felix* that he was *Inexplebilis Gurgis* an Insatiable Gulph of Covetousness. The *Jewish Historian* speaks of his Incontinency, and the *Sacred Story* gives us reason eno to think that he was Intemperate and Unjust; or else he would not have trembled as he did, when the *Apostle* reasoned before him of righteousness, and of temperance, and of the Judgment to come. And a Man of so much Corruption, could never make a good Governour. The Pretended Successors of *Peter* have also assumed the venerable names of *Pius*, & *Clement*, & *Innocent*, & *Boniface*; as if they excell'd other Men in Piety, Clemency, Innocency and good works; but the World knows how poorly they have answered these honorary Titles.

BUT this is the honorable Appellation which belongs unto the Princes of the Earth when they Exercise

Exercise their Authority unto the best good of the People: *They are Benefactors*: 'Tis their Duty to be such, and when they are such it is their Glory and their Excellency, Accordingly the Doctrine may be,

DOCTRINE

THAT it is the Duty and Excellency of those that are in Authority to be Benefactors. So to improve the Power & Authority given them from Above, that they may deserve to be so called.

THERE are two Propositions I would speak to under this Doctrine.

PROP. I. THAT the Divine Providence does call some to Exercise Authority over Others. And here we may consider,

I. THAT the Supream Dominion is the LORDS. Dominion and fear are with Him. He is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory for ever. Amen.

HIS Authority is the most Sovereign, Absolute and Supream. He is Higher than the Kings of the Earth; He hath a Name above every Name. All humane Power is Derivative, but His is an Original, Absolute, Eternal, & Independent Power; He is the Blessed and Only Potentate; He is the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only Wise GOD, to whom belongs the Dominion, and the Power for ever.

AND His Dominion is the most Extensive. As He is the Everlasting GOD the LORD the

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Creator

Creator of all the Ends of the Earth; So He is the Governour among the nations, and all Creatures in all places of his dominion are under His Rule & Gubernation.

THE Princes of the Earth had their *Proprietary Governments*. *The head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin, i. e. Damascus is the Capital City of Syria, and Rezin is King thereof. The head of Ephraim is Samaria; and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son, Isa. 7. 8. But GOD is the Head and King over all the Countries and Kingdoms of the World; their Powers are limited & confined unto their own narrow Districts and Territories; but GOD is a universal King; He ruleth by his power for ever, his eyes behold the nations, Psal. 66. 7. He hath established his throne in the Heaven, and his kingdom ruleth over all; There the Ancient of days does sit, and is waited upon with State and Magnificence, the glorious Angels are His royal Attendance, and there is an Innumerable Company of them. The Chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of Angels, God is in the midst of them, as in Sinai, in his holy place.*

AND as the Supream and Sovereign LORD, He gives *Laws* unto the whole Creation; He orders all the times and the changes that go over the Kingdoms, and the Countries; and in all His Administrations He is *excellent in Power, and in Judgment, and in Plenty of Justice*; and tho' His Judgments are a great deep, and we cannot know them by reason of darkness; yet we should always reverence and adore the rectitude of His governing Providence,

Providence, and be ready to pay that just acknowledgement unto GOD, Psal. 97. 2. *Though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet Righteousness and Judgment are the habitation of his throne.*

2. *THE Divine Providence calls some from among men, to exercise Authority over others.* The Wisdom of GOD has Established a Government in the World, and ordained that there should be a rule over Men; and the World without it would no more be a *Cosmos* but a *Chaos*. When *Lycurgus* was Importuned by one to establish a popular Parity in the State, Do thou says he, first begin it in thy own Family. Civil Government is of Divine Institution; and the Institution is so necessary that human Societies cannot subsist without it. There is a Rule even in the Kingdom of Darkness, and a Prince of the Power of the Air. The light of Nature led the Nations to practise upon this Principle: the Gentiles had their Kings. But the Divine Providence over-rules; and GOD that Governs the World puts the Scepter into their hands. Hence the Prophet *Daniel* tells *Belshazzar*, Dan. 5. 18. *The most high God gave unto Nebuchadnezzar thy Father a Kingdom, and Majesty, & Honour, & Glory.* Hence 'tis said, Prov. 8. 15. *By me Kings reign. For me Kings reign,* so some read it; and if we should read it so, it may teach the Kings of the Earth, that they ought to rule for GOD, and improve their Authority to His Glory. Some read it, *In me*, that is, in the Exalting & Honouring of me they shall reign prosperously: If they honour me, I will honour them, if they exalt me, I will

Establish them. The best way for Kings, and their Kingdoms to flourish is to serve the Lord.

BUT we read it, *By me*; that is, not meerly by Divine Permission, but by Divine Ordination, and Appointment: Whether Kingdoms be Hereditary, or Elective; yet the Powers that be, *are ordained of GOD*. The Eternal King has an uncontrollable right, to give the Kingdoms of Men unto whomsoever He will; and sometimes He sets over them the basest of Men, to the intent that Men may know, that the Most High does rule, that Dominion is not founded in Grace, and that the Gifts of Providence are dispensed by a Sovereign hand. So sometimes GOD *lifteth up the poor out of the dust, and raiseth up the beggar from the dung-hill, to set them among princes, and to cause them to inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars of the Earth are the Lords, and he hath set the world upon them*, 1 Sam. 2. 8.

THIS may suffice for the first Proposition.

PRO P. II. *THEY that exercise Authority over others should be Benefactors.* They should exercise their Authority to the benefit of the People, that they may be worthy of that honorable Appellation.

AND here I shall endeavour first to shew wherein they should be Benefactors, and then shall consider their *Obligation* to be such.

1. I shall endeavour first to show wherein they should be Benefactors, and I will only mention four particulars.

(1.) *BE*

(1.) *BT making the best Laws for the benefit of the People.* Good Laws are a benefit to a People. And wise Lawgivers are great Benefactors, and have been honored as such among the Nations. So was *Solon, Lycurgus*, and others. The making of Laws is one branch of the Power committed unto Rulers; and the making of good Laws will be one principal Instance of their *Wisdom*, their *Integrity*, and their *Publick Care* for their People.

L A W S for the defending them in their Common Rights as Men, and Religious Rights as Christians: Laws for the direction of the Ministers of Justice; that they may know how to minister Justice and Judgment unto all Israel: Laws for the detecting and punishing Fraud, Forgery, Perjury, and every bold Iniquity: The most effectual Laws possible, for the suppressing Prophaness, Intemperance & every Immorality; and *Sumptuary* Laws as their Wisdom shall think fit for the governing the Expences of a People, the Retrenching the overgrown and insupportable Excesses and Extravagancies; and Encouraging Thriftiness and Frugality. The *Romans* made Laws to moderate the Excesses of Diet and Apparel.

BUT then it should be minded, that 'tis *Execution* that gives life and force to Laws, and makes them quick and powerfull, and without this *the sons of Zeruiab* will put forth their heads. The Lusts of Men are very unruly things, and they that are under the dominion of them will run unto all Excess of Riot: These raging waves of the Sea will be foaming out their own shame, these Sons of Violence will not be restrained, unless the Civil Magistrate

gistrate unsheath the Sword of Justice, and smite thro' the Loins of them that work Iniquity.

(2.) *By Employing the best of Men in the Administration.* I know every good Man is not qualified for Rule. There are Gifts for Government, that are distinct from the Gifts of Sanctification; yet the People will rejoyce when the Righteous are in Authority. If Rulers are strangers to GOD, to CHRIST, to Virtue, to Religion, and they that work wickedness are set up, and Men of the most Loyal and Religious Principles, thro' unreasonable prejudices laid aside, it can't be for the Honor of GOD, for the Interest of a People, nor for the glory of the Government. When *Solomon* saw folly set in great dignity, he says it was an Error: Eccl. 10. 5. The most distinguishing honors are certainly due to Men of Merit, to such as have distinguish'd themselves by their Virtue, their Loyalty, their Fidelity; by their noble and generous Service for the Publick; their good deeds should not be forgotten, their names ought to be in everlasting remembrance. The Laws of Honour, of Justice, and of Gratitude oblige hereunto. The *Roman* greatness was much owing to their Honor and Justice herein: And the *Persian Monarchs* kept a Register Book of the Names of the Benefactors, that Honor might be done them accordingly, *Esth.* 6. And he that deprives Men of the honor due to Virtue, deprives them of Virtue it self, says *Cato*. And on the other hand, when Persons have rendred themselves unworthy of the Publick Trust, by their meaness, their mercenariness, their baseness; by their

their loose principles, and their corrupt and covetous practices; they should not have the Publick Countenance; they should have no Opportunity put into their hands to go off with the spoil of their oppressed Neighbours; they will *transgress for a piece of bread*. They should therefore *break the Jaws of the wicked, and pluck the spoil out of their teeth*,

(3.) *BT setting the best Examples before the People.* Good Examples may do a great deal of Good. The Examples of Rulers will be likely to have a great deal of Influence, when they are Men of Virtue, Probity and Goodness, and excell therein. Their bright and shining Examples will enlighten & influence others. But when Rulers are the *Rulers of Sodom*, the People will be the *People of Gomorrah*. *If a Ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked*. They should not therefore indulge themselves in any thing that is mean, fordid, or dishonourable. Its pity that Men of Honor and Distinction in the World, should bring a stain upon all their Glory by a fordid Indulgence unto any base Lust, or tarnish the brightness of their Character with some such Exception as that, or one a great deal worse than that, *2 Kings 5. 1.*

(4.) *BT doing what they can to establish and promote the true Religion.* Religion is the *Life of a People*, and by taking care of that we shall *prolong our days in the land*, which the **LORD GOD** gave unto our Fathers.

I T is the *Strength of a People*, and by taking care of that, Rulers will be the *Strength, and the Stability of our times*,

IT is the *Safety* of a People, and by taking care of that, we shall be safe *under the shadow of the Almighty*. And in the Day when it shall revive and flourish, even in that Day shall this Song be sung in the Land, *We have a strong City, Salvation will God appoint for walls and for bulwarks*.

IT is the *Glory* of a People, and it will make us high in name, and in praise, and in honour above all People. *Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach unto any people.*

RELIGION has both a *natural* and *moral* tendency to promote the Prosperity of a People: if Religion flourishes the Country will flourish; and we shall prosper whithersoever we turn our selves. Our *Merchandize* will flourish, and that will be a benefit to the Country; our *Fishery* will flourish and that will be an advantage; our *Husbandry* will flourish, and that will be a benefit, *for the King himself, is served by the field*: then shall *Zebulun rejoice in his goings forth, and Issachar in his tent.*

RELIGION tends to *prevent and divert* Divine Judgments; and the Judgments of GOD are wasting and breaking things; they make a Land mourn, they cause the glory of Jacob to wax thin, and the *fatness of his flesh to wax lean.*

RELIGION tends to *secure the Divine Presence* and Blessing; and the Presence of GOD with a People, is the making of a People; if GOD leave them they can't be happy, if GOD be with them they can't be miserable. *The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is in the midst of them; he hath as it were the strength of a Unicorn.* Numb. 23. 21. Where there is much of Religion or the Power

Power of godliness among a People, GOD will not leave them, nor forsake them. So that our Religion is the foundation of all our hopes & expectations. This is the best foundation we can build our hopes upon, both as to the present and future Generation; as long as this shall continue in its glory, and increase, we may humbly hope for the blessing of Heaven even upon our latest Posterity: for the Mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, &c.

2. LET us consider the Obligations on Rulers to be Benefactors.

(1.) THEY are Ordained of GOD for this very End. Rom. 13. 4. That they may be Ministers of GOD for good; Instruments in the hands of Divine Providence to the weal & prosperity of a People. This is the End of their betrustment, they should therefore lay out themselves for the good of the People; defend their rights & liberties, and protect them in all their valuable Priviledges, and when they do so, they are the light & life of a People. They are *as the light of the Morning, when the Sun ariseth, even a Morning without clouds,* 2 Sam. 23. 4. They are *the breath of our Nostrils,* the anointed of the Lord; of whom we said, *We shall live under their shadow among the heathen.*

BUT when Rulers forget their duty, and abuse their Power; when they neglect their care, their People and their charge; grow Imperious and Tyrannical, lord it over GOD's Heritage, and are like *the kine of Bashan in the mountains of Samaria, that oppress the poor & crush the needy, and say to their master bring and let us drink;* they are so far from
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answering the Ends of Government, and from being *Benefactors*, that they are the greatest *Burdens* unto Mankind, and the greatest *Plagues* and punishments to the World. *As a roaring Lion and a ranging Bear, so is a wicked ruler among the People*, Prov. 28. 15.

(2.) *THE Publick Support is another Obligation upon them.* For this very cause do we pay tribute, sayes the Apostle, *Because they are Gods Ministers attending continually upon this very thing*, Rom. 13. 6. The bread of the Governour is given that they might Imploy their Time, their Talents, and Powers in the Service of the Publick. Reason and Conscience obliges the People to support them if they do attend upon it. And the Lord *JESUS CHRIST* has laid this duty upon the People towards their Rulers, in the same Commandment with the duty they owe to GOD. Math. 22. 21. *Render therefore unto Cesar the things that are Cessars, and unto God the things that are Gods.* And therefore as we should be ready to render tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour is due; so they that receive it are verily debtors unto us, to do us all the good they can.

(3.) *THE special Trust & Confidence reposed in them is a further Obligation upon them.* The King as Supream is put in trust by GOD to be a *Nursing Father* to His People: and Governours, and such as are sent abroad by him, into the Kings Provinces, are Intrusted by their Royal Master, and He has a Confidence in them that they will Exercise their Authority to the best advantage of the Provinces.

But

But if they should seek not their welfare but their hurt, and *damage arise to the King*, or to His Subjects; They basely betray their trust, are false to GOD, and disloyal to their Prince; are criminal and deeply guilty, and forfeit the good Character in the *Text*. Yea, they are under the *Oath* of GOD, and that adds weight & solemnity to the trust; and they can't neglect their duty herein without the deepest Perjury and Guilt: The tye is Sacred and Deep to manage this great betrustment faithfully, and to them may be directed the words of the wise Man, *I counsel thee to keep the Kings Commandment, because of the Oath of God.*

(4.) *THE Sacred Rules given by the Holy Ghost, to direct their Administrations, are a strong Obligation upon them.* They have indeed the Statutes of the Kingdom for their direction: but yet they should make the Statutes of GOD the Man of their counsel; they should have a Copy of these alwayes before them, and should read therein all the dayes of their lives; and they shall do well if they take heed unto them: They can't be good Rulers, if they have no regard to the Rules of Righteousness and of Justice; if they turn aside after Lucre and take Bribes, and corrupt Judgment, they forget what the Spirit of the LORD said unto David, 2 Sam. 23. 2. *The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake unto me, he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord.*

(5.) *THE honourable Titles given to Rulers, teaches them they should be Benefactors.*

I have said, *ye are gods*, and GOD is the great Benefactor: they are the *Anointed Cherub* that Covereth,

vereth, and should stretch the *wings* of their Protection over all the People.

THEY are the *shields of the Earth*, and should defend them from all that shoot their Arrows at them.

THEY are the *Pillars of the Earth*, and should support and strengthen the State, by their Wisdom and Counsel.

THEY are the *strong foundation* of the Earth, and if the foundation is overthrown, what can the righteous do?

THEY are *heirs of restraint*, according to the Marginal Note in *Judg.* 18. 7. and should put a check to the growing Sins of the times, by punishing Intemperance, Excesses and Iniquities of the places where they Rule. He is the best Magistrate who restrains Sin most. Sin does the greatest hurt, & the preventing of that will do the greatest good.

THEY are the *Shepherds of Israel*, and should lead them to the still waters, and make them to lie down in green pastures.

THEY are the *Heads of the tribes* || of Israel, and as the head is to be a guide unto the body, so they should lead them by the Integrity of their heart, and guide them according to the skilfulness of their hand.

AND thus I have endeavoured to show your Duty, and your Obligations to it.

LET us pass into the Improvement.

|| *Princeps est Pastor publicus & Communis.* Cassiod.

USE

USE, I. SEE what should govern the Sons of Men in desiring or accepting places in the Government. Not meerly to gratify an ambitious humour, or that they might have the Dominion; nor that they may Domineer and Lord it over others, because they delight to crush under their feet the prisoners of the earth: But that they may serve GOD, & his People, and be *Publick Blessings* to the World.

MEN that are desirous of Rule should examine their Principles, and see what it is that governs them in their Desires; and their Capacities too, to see whether they are equal to the Places they desire. "There are aspiring *Absaloms* that say, *O that I were a Judge in Israel*, and will caress the People, and use all the arts of Infundation to make an Interest for themselves". But alas, they that are fondest of places are not always the fittest for them; and it amounts to a demonstration that it is so, when we see they don't know what to do with them when they have them.

WHEN such petition for Promotion, they may be modestly end replied to in the Words of our Saviour unto these two aspiring Disciples, *Ye know not what ye ask.*

2. WHEN Rulers are Benefactors, they should be treated as such, and be Loved, Obeyed & Honoured accordingly. A Just and Wise Government is a Divine and Heavenly Blessing, and when the *Eternal Father* commands this Blessing upon us, we should accept it always with all thankfulness. We have such an Interest and Concernment in the Princes that sit upon the Throne of Great Britain, that

that when the Throne of those Kingdoms is filled with such a *Royal Benefactor* as it is this Day, we should *bow our knee unto the Father of Spirits* for such a Royal Blessing, and be ready too to bow the knee unto our *most gracious King*, and cry before him, as they did to *Joseph* in the Day of his advancement, *Abrech*, which signifies, *tender Father*. And they that are uneasy under such a Government and Rebellious to it, are certainly guilty of the greatest *Ingratitude* to GOD, and to their Prince: And yet under the best of Kings, there are such uneasy and *male-contented* Spirits, who are difficult to the publick Peace and Tranquillity. But the *Sons of Belial* shall all be as *thorns thrust away*, because they cannot be taken with hands; but he that will touch them, must be fenced with Iron and the staff of a spear; as 2 Sam. 23. 6.

AND when by his *Royal favour* we are blest with *Rulers*, who are disposed to be *Benefactors* to us, and are glad of opportunities to serve us, and promote our best Interest, we should show our selves a *Loyal*, and a *Gratefull* People, and testify the *sense* of the Divine Favor to us herein, by obeying the *Powers* that are set over us; Let us fear God, and honor the King, and not meddle with them that are given to change.

3. LET those who are called by the Providence of GOD, to exercise Authority over us, be *Benefactors* to us. Let our *Spiritual Rulers* be *Benefactors*. When our Saviour says to His Disciples in the next words to the Text, *but ye shall not be so*; He does not mean that they should not be *Benefactors*, No; they should be eminently such. They
are

are Rulers in the House of their GOD ; but they must not *Lord it over God's heritage*. They are not Lords of their Faith ; they have no just claim to a Spiritual Jurisdiction over the Consciences of Men, to make *Ecclesiastical Canons*, and demand Obedience to them upon the pain of damnation. Their business is to Study, and Pray, and Preach, and use their utmost wisdom and skill to bring Men from under the power of Satan, that he may no longer exercise Dominion over them ; to show them that the Government of CHRIST is the most easy and safe ; *that his yoke is easy, and his burden is light* ; and so to bring them to obey the *Laws of CHRIST*, and the *Doctrines* of the Gospel.

IF you can serve them in their *outward* Interests, if you can do any thing that by the Blessing of GOD may *prevent* their misery in a day of common Calamity, you will do well ; but you will be Benefactors indeed, when you study to do their *Souls* good, to convince them of the evil of *Sin*, and the danger of *damnation*, of the necessity of *Repentance* towards GOD, and *Faith* in our LORD JESUS CHRIST ; to bring them unto a sense of their Duty, and into the Love and practice of Virtue : This is the greatest Service that you can do to poor Sinners ; in doing this you will be the greatest Benefactors to them ; you cannot do them a greater kindness : And know for your Encouragement, *that he that Converts a sinner from the Error of his way, shall save a soul from death*.

AND let Civil Rulers do us all the good they can also. I have hinted a few things wherein you may be Benefactors to us. I shall not stand to repeat

peat them, only one thing I must beg leave to Inculcate, and to Insist upon, because all our happiness is bound up in it; and that is RELIGION, and nothing is more worthy of your Care; nor can any thing make us happy without it.

CAMILLUS did Appeal to the Experience of the Romans, whether ever they had better Luck than when they carefully served GOD, or worse than when they neglected Him. And Cyrus as *Xenophon* observes, laid the foundation of the *Persian Empire*, not so much by his *Valour*, as by a *Religious* Worship of Heaven, and Liberality in the Service of GOD. And does not the *Prophet* of GOD ascribe the Prosperity of *Israel*, in the Days of the good King *Josiah*, to his Virtue and his Goodness, his Religion and his Righteousness, and sets his Example as a Pattern for Government before the face of his Successor? *Did not thy father eat and drink, and do Justice and Judgment, and then it was well with him?* Jer. 22. 15.

AND has it not always been found, that the Decays of Religion among a People, has been a fatal Symptom upon them? And that there is no surer Sign of a Countries Destruction than Contempt of Religion? *despising the Ephod* was, as one says, the rot of *Sauls* Kingdom; this was it that brôt *Judah* Low, and laid her even with the ground; 'Twas this that sap't the foundation of that once stately and flourishing Kingdom, and hastned upon them those Consumptive Judgments that devoured *Jacob*, and laid her pleasant Places desolate.

AND I am sure if the welfare of this People, of this Country, and of these Churches has such a Depen-

Dependance upon our Religion, its worth while to take care for the life and growth, the preservation and the prosperity of it; and if our Rulers would be Benefactors to us they must Espouse the cause thereof.

Two things I would say, if need be; to move you to it.

1. *IT is the best Religion in the World.* It is a Religion that came from Heaven, and it will carry every Man thither who is true to the principles of it. A Religion that came from GOD, and is purely of Divine Institution; A Religion that has not only GOD for its Author, but Holiness for its Rule, and Happiness for its Reward. A Religion that instructs in the whole Duty of Man; and teaches us to fear GOD, and honour the King, as well as to love the Brotherhood: A Religion that recommends *Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, Phil. 4. 8.* A Religion that not only binds us to a strict Morality, but to the highest degrees of Sanctification. A pure Religion, and undefiled before God, and the Father. A better Religion than the Antient Jewish; and much better to be sure than the present Romish Religion, where they have a Catechism to begin with without the Second Commandment; a Sacrament without a Cup; a Bible in an unknown Tongue; and a Service that can't be understood; and no wonder if they have therefore a Faith without knowledge, a Hope without a foundation, and a Charity that damns all the World but themselves.

2. *OUR Religion is the best thing that we have : and if we lose that, we shall lose our all ; if we lose that we shall lose our GOD, and shall come to Micah's doleful Lamentation, They have taken away my gods; and what have I more ? We may then baptise our Ichabods, and cry, Where is the Glory ! Therefore tho' our honourable Rulers have other things to take care of, yet this is the One Thing needful ; and ought to be secur'd above all. And two things are necessary to the support thereof, That a proper care be taken of the Ministers of Religion, and of the Means of Education.*

(1.) *OF the Ministers of Religion.* That the Persons that Exercise this Ministry in your Government be *Sound in the faith, holding fast the faithful word, &c. Titus I. II.*

MAGISTRATES and KINGS, as one observes well, are to be Reformers of Corruption in the Church, as well as of Disorders in the State. Indeed they have no power that is *formally* and *intrinsically* Spiritual & Ecclesiastical, but only *objectively* so : they have not the power of *order* which gives authority to Preach, nor the power of the *Keys* by Ecclesiastical Censures ; yet they have a power of Jurisdiction over Churches, and ought by their Laws to provide for the Worship of GOD, to root out Heresies, to prevent Schisms and Rents in the Church of GOD, to take care that the order of the Churches in a Country be not Insulted, and trampled under foot ; and to see that all things be done decently, and in order,

THEY are also to take care that the dignity of the Ministry be preserved, and the Contempt of the
Clergy

Clergy prevented, that the *riches* be brought into the house of the LORD, I mean, That *they who serve at the Altar, may be able to live upon the Altar*. The Provision made for them under the Gospel is sufficient, and they have power from CHRIST their Master to challenge an honourable Support, a Maintenance worthy of the hardness of their Service, and the dignity of their Office, and if they had it they need not prophecy in Sackcloth: and the Mean Circumstances some of them are under, and their oppressing cares, temptations and discouragements, tend not to the furtherance but to the hindrance of the Gospel: 'tis a means to bring the Gospel it self into contempt, and fill the Country with a mean, and insufficient Ministry.

(2.) *OF the Means of Education.* The Nurseries and Seminary of Learning, the Schools, and the College; that our Sons may be as Plants growing up in their Youth, Plants of renown, and not weeds or degenerate Plants. A Liberal Education, is much for the Service and Glory of the Country; and the Government should take the greatest care for its Encouragement, that so the Schools may supply the University, the University the Churches, the Seats of Judicature, and the Council-board. Unless we are of the mind of the Inhabitants of *Norcia*, who (its said,) had the Liberty of choosing their own Magistrates, but took a most Exact and Particular care that no Man that could Read or Write should have any share in the Government.

MAY GOD Almighty bless the College and the Benefactors of it; and may that Society always answer the End of its foundation, Endowment and Benefactions.

AND let the Laws for Schools be supported with such Sanctions as may break in pieces all the base, unworthy Attempts to elude them, by those who are no Friends to Learning. And let GOD raise up *of our sons to be prophets, and our young men to be Nazarites unto the Lord.* And may the Sons that the College brings forth, prove always the Joy of their Parents, and the Honor of their Tutors, the glory of the University, and a blessing to the Country: Peaceable to the State, and Serviceable to the Church.

IN these things our Rulers may be Benefactors to us. You have greater *Advantages* to be so, and greater *Opportunities*, than other Men. You are under greater *Engagements*, and you have greater *Encouragements*: The People of GOD will Honor you in the gate, and rise up, and call you Blessed; and the Churches of GOD will bless you; if they see your daily care for them, they will put up daily Prayers for you, that the great GOD would recompence all your fatherly Care of the Country and of these Churches into your own Bosoms. The People of the Land will be under no temptation to conspire, or rebel against the Government, and meditate Revolts and Revolutions, but will sit under the shadow of your Government with great Satisfaction and Contentment, and the GOD that chose our Fathers to be His People, and placed them here because He delighted in them, will also delight in you, and *remember you according to all the good that you shall do for this people.*

BUT if you should abuse your Power, and go over all the bounds of your Duty, & Obligations; oppress

oppress & vex this People, and lay heavy burdens upon them, and grievous to be born, you'll forfeit the gratitude and regard due to Benefactors; and become obnoxious not only to the resentments of the People groaning under their burdens, but also to the Divine Displeasure; for if GOD has still a Delight in us, He will not suffer us to be wholly oppressed, and spoiled; but He will plead our cause and execute Judgment for us. As Oppression makes a wise Man mad, so it makes a righteous GOD angry.

WHEN *Nebuchadnezzar's Pride and Insolence*, was grown to an insufferable height, the Decree came forth for His Deposition; *A watcher & a holy One came down from heaven, and cried aloud against him, hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit, Dan. 4.* This matter was by the Decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the Holy One, to the intent that such Monsters of Men may know, that they are more fit to be turned a grazing among the beasts of the Field, than to have a Rule over Men.

BUT we hope better things of you our most Honourable Rulers, tho' we thus speak, and expect better things from you.

WE are the Subjects of the best of Kings, and expect to enjoy under your Government all the Liberties which our gracious King has Indulged us with.

WE are the People of the LORD, and look not only for Justice, but for Favour from you.

WE are a Free People, and ought not to be brēt under bondage, nor made to serve with rigour, and put under saws and harrows of Iron.

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WE are *reasonable* Creatures, and the Rule you have over us, is not a Rule over Beasts, but over Men.

YET we are a *poor, sinfu' People*, and you had need do all you can, to Reform us, and make us better.

Y E A we are a *broken & divided People*, and need all your Wisdom, and Skill, and Compassion to heal our *Divisions*, and make up our *Breaches*, and if thro' your Wisdom & Application, we shall once again come to be *a City compact together*, the Tribes shall go up, *the tribes of the Lord, to the testimony of Israel*, to shew their thankfulness unto the LORD.

AND O that it would please your *Excellency* to Improve all your Interest at Home, and your Wisdom and Power here, to lead us out of all our Difficulties. You have it much in your Power to be a *Benefactor* to us, by your *Affenting* and *Negative* Voice; and we trust you will still and always esteem it your Duty and Glory, as well as your Wisdom to use that Power accordingly.

THE *Divine Providence* is to be adored which took care of *You*, in the Years when you Jeoparded your Life in the high Places of the Field, and covered your head in the day of Death and Danger; in the Battel of the Warrior, with confused Noises, and Garments rolled in Blood; when you heard the Thunder of the Captains, and the shoutings; when a thousand fell at your side, and ten thousand at your Right hand; when you went on to meet the Armed Men, under one of
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the bravest *Generals* in the World *, not as the Horse rushes into the Battel, with a brutish fearlessness, and thotlessness; but stood and fought with a Christian Courage, Bravery and Resolution, till the GOD of Armies brat you off with Salvation, and Honour, and the Glory, and the Victory.

MAY the GOD that Instructed you in the Art of War and taught your hands to War, and your Fingers to Fight, now He has set you in the first Seat of *Government* here, give you understanding in the times to know what *Israel* ought to do: fill you with a Spirit of Council, and of Might, of Zeal and prudent Resolution; make Righteousness the Girdle of your Loins, and Faithfulness the Girdle of your Reins, make you more and more a steady Friend and Father to the Country, a great Blessing and Benefactor to us.

You have need of Patience to bear the *stewardness* of the Congregation, their Cumbrance, their Burden, and their Strife; and of Wisdom too to go out and come in before us; and it will be pleasing unto GOD, if you go unto him for both: He giveth liberally, and upbraideith not.

AND let those who are to stand this Day in the Quality of *Elders*, do us all the good they can in that Capacity, that this Day may be a good Day, the Day of our Rejoicing, and the Day of the Gladness of our hearts,

THE Providence of GOD and your *Principals* have put this Honor upon you who are the Trustees

* John Duke of Marlborough.

and Representatives of the People, and you may be very Seviceable to this People by choosing out from among our Tribes, *able Men, fearing God, hating Covetousness*; Men of Truth, able to support the Authority of their Places, and equal to their solemn Trust and Charge *.

You know the Publick Interests of this Country are too precious to be put into the hands of Men who are either unskilful or unfaithful, who are really unfit for Council and for Rule; and we have this confidence in you, that according to your Power you will prevent it: we have a great dependance upon you, that you will deal truly and sincerely in this business.

If Electors once come to be under the malignant Influences of Prejudice, Partiality, Disaffection, or any Corrupt and Private views, inconsistent with the Publick Interest, they will render themselves unworthy of the *Electoral Dignity*, (if I may use the word here) and they will never give a *perfect Lot*.

You should manage that great betrustment under the awfull View of the strict *Account* you must one day give of your doings herein: You

* The Catholic Queen of Spain, *Donna Isabella*, took such Care that all places under her should be filled with proper Officers, that she did give strict Order in Writing, that even the Cryers place of such a City should be given to such a one, because he had the best Voice; and if Catholick Princes had such care and respect to the quality of Persons that filled up the meanest Offices; what Care ought there to be had in those of Justice and of Government?

should

should therefore sit and act, deliberate and vote, as under the government of the best and most excellent Principles. Let the honour of GOD, the good of the Country, and the peace of your own Conscience, govern you all the Day long, that when you come at Night to reflect upon the Actions of the Day, your Consciences may have no reason to reproach you for doing amiss; but you may be able to say, that in the Integrity of your hearts, and in the Innocency of your hands you have done all this. And ask wisdom of GOD, and we will ask for you, that as the day is, so your strength may be. We will also pray unto the LORD our GOD for you, *To deliver you from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence; That He would preserve you in Health, and keep you in perfect Peace.* We wish you the Wisdom of GOD for your direction, *even the Wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and of good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy; and that this wisdom may dwell with you.*

WE wish you a happy Temper, Unanimity and Agreement; the best Conduct, and Dispatch in all the business of the present Day, the present Session, and the present Year; free from all Unchristian Jars and Unmanly Reflections; free from all Angry Resentments, and Intemperate Heats in your Debates; free from all Unhappy Non-Concurrences, and undesirable Dissolutions.

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WE with the **G O D of Peace** may be with
 you; that the **Prince of Peace** may preside
 among you; that the **Peace of G O D** may
 rule in your hearts, and in your minds;
 and that **Grace, Mercy and Peace**
 may be Multiplied unto you:

This is the **Blessing** which
 we wish you, out of the
House of the L O R D,
 and let all the
People say,
AMEN.

F I N I S.

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